

Midnight In Esthar

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Summary: Squall and the others are in Esthar to meet the President. They have a spare night, so decide to check out the local clubs, but first, the girls have some shopping to do....

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A Squall and Rinoa romance! (I'm beginning to like Rinoa again....)

The song in it is Truly, Madly, Deeply by Savage Garden, and no, I don't know what the right words are. I just made it up, but I think it's kinda close.

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Rinoa put down her hairbrush and smiled at her reflection in the mirror. She was happy, as they had finally some free time to explore the city of Esthar without worrying about battles or any enemies to defeat for a few days. And she was going to be in the company of a relaxed Squall. That was something she hadn't seen yet...and she was looking forward to it.

Hearing Selphie outside her room, Rinoa hurriedly picked up a lipstick and applied it. She then put on some mascara and eye shadow. She never usually wore make-up, but she wanted to look nice today. She had a feeling today was special. Selphie burst into Rinoa's

bedroom, laughing.

"Hey! Are you nearly ready? Zell's already yelled at me to hurry up once!" she said. She noticed the make-up on Rinoa, and raised an eyebrow.

"Whoa.....is there anyone coming with us I don't know about?" she asked jokily. She knew Rinoa was trying her best to impress Squall. Rinoa smiled and glanced down. She was wearing a blue cotton dress and light silver jewellery. Selphie thought she looked beautiful.

"Do you think it's too much?" asked Rinoa quietly. Selphie smiled and shook her head.

"No. You look perfect." she said, smiling at her friend. Rinoa smiled back, and the two of them left the room to meet the rest of their friends.

Zell and Squall were talking loudly together, and Rinoa smiled shyly at Squall. He was laughing, but his mouth dropped open when he saw her. She blushed when she realised he was staring at her, and felt self conscious. Zell, who had been laughing at something, stopped talking to see what Squall was looking at. He grinned when he saw Rinoa, who was beginning to inch behind Selphie.

"RINOA!" he yelled, looking her up and down. She blushed furiously. Zell took no notice.

"You look hot!" he said. Squall elbowed him in the ribs to make him shut up.

"You look...really nice." Squall said, smiling at her. She looked back at him, and their eyes met for a few seconds, before she dropped her gaze. She felt a hot flush creeping over her as she realised he liked the way she looked. Zell impatiently motioned for them to leave the ship. They all got out, and stepped into the sunlight of Esthar City.

Squall was dressed in casual clothes. He wore blue jeans, and a black wool v-neck sweater. Rinoa secretly thought he looked pretty hot too. Noticing that the lifters were out of order, they decided to walk to the center of the city. She walked behind the men with Quistis and Selphie, who were both talking about how different the men looked when they were relaxed. Except Zell. He was always relaxed. Quistis was talking about how sweet Zell looked in uniform, and Selphie was laughing. Rinoa just smiled wistfully, remembering when she was at the SeeD Graduation party, and she saw Squall in his SeeD uniform. He looked so sexy in it, she thought. The two others saw this wistful look, and Selphie nudged Rinoa.

"I know who you're thinking about." she said, smiling. Rinoa sighed guiltily.

"You're probably right." she said. Selphie giggled, and leant closer to Rinoa.

"He said you looked really nice!" she whispered. Rinoa smiled.

"I know!" she whispered back. Quistis, who heard their conversation

smiled.

"Rinoa, I've got an idea....." she said, and the three walked slower so the men wouldn't hear them.

"Why don't we all go shopping for clothes? Spend our salaries on something other than remedies and potions.." said Quistis. Selphie smiled.

"Yeah, but what for? We're not going anywhere." she reminded Quistis. Rinoa gasped.

"Why don't we go to that club...y'know..the one we saw advertised..." she said, trying to remember the name of it.

"Seventh Heaven." said Quistis. She looked ahead to where the men were. Irvine and Zell were talking loudly, but Squall looked deep in thought. "I think our leader needs cheering up. Rinoa, it's down to you..." she said. Rinoa shook her head.

"Don't you remember the concert? The last time you tried to pair me up with Squall? You were all so busy trying to see what was going on you started playing terribly and he walked off!" she said. Selphie took her arm.

"Rinoa," she said softly. "I think he really likes you. Have you noticed the way he's been looking at you recently? I don't think he realises he's doing it, but still...." she said. Rinoa sighed.

"You want me to try and seduce Squall to cheer him up?!" she said. Quistis nodded.

"You know you'll enjoy it. Isn't it what you want?" she said, smiling. Rinoa grinned back.

"Yes! Let's go spend all of our money...." she said, and they sped up to catch up with the boys.

"Squall!" called Quistis. He turned around.

"What is it?" he asked. There was a breeze, and dark strands of his hair were falling over his face.

"We wanted to do some shopping. We'll meet up later." said Quistis.

"Sure," said Squall. "Where do you want to meet?" he asked. Quistis stared into his deep blue eyes as she spoke to him.

"There's a club we saw that looks good. Seventh Heaven. At about ten pm?" she said. He nodded, and turned back. Quistis noticed that before he turned around, he glanced over to Rinoa, as if checking she was still there. Quistis chose to ignore the pang of jealousy she felt, and turned back to the others.

"Let's go!" she said.
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The three walked quickly to the shopping arcade. Rinoa was excited at the thought of how tonight may turn out. She had never ever felt this way about anyone before. Whenever she saw Squall, her heart quickened, and she felt lightheaded. He was just so...perfect. Even his coldness attracted her too him. It made him seem mysterious, and in a way vulnerable, as if he was trying to shield himself.

She wanted to break through that shield, and get to Squall's heart.

The first shop they saw was huge. Esthar had such a large population, it had better shops than any other nation. This one was full of futuristic looking clothes, and some classic styles which Rinoa liked the look of. She and the others entered the shop, and looked around. Quistis went over to a rack, and pulled off a garment, showing it to Rinoa. She smiled.

"It'snice," she said, uncertain. It was a red silk corset style top, which laced up in the top half. It looked a little too promiscuous for Rinoa's taste.

"Are you going to try it on?" she asked. Rinoa shook her head.

"No. Oh, look at this..." she said, and picked up another piece of clothing. It was a linen shirt which was translucent, and looked a bit boring. Selphie laughed.

"You do remember where we are going, don't you?" she asked Rinoa. Looking at what Selphie held, she was a little surprised. She was holding a tiny leather skirt and a blue satin shirt.

"Come on, I wanna go try these on!" said Selphie impatiently. Quistis took the shirt off Rinoa.

"Let me choose for you," she said. She looked around for a few seconds, before choosing the perfect item of clothing. They headed off to the changing rooms.

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"Oh! It's so tiiiight!" yelled Selphie from one cubicle. Quistis laughed as she heard the petite girl moaning as she tried to fit it into the tiny skirt. Quistis herself had chosen a sleeveless leather top, much racier than anything she would usually wear. She had teamed it with a red satin skirt which came to just below her knees. The skirt had silver embroidery on it, and was very pretty. She eyed herself in the mirror, wondering if bare shoulders was really her.

Selphie breathed in deeply as she pulled the leather over her hips. She was slim, but this skirt was very tight. She checked the label. It was a size six! She moaned, and tried to pull it off again, her eyes opening wide as she realised it was easier said than done. The leather was sticking to her skin, and squeaked as she tugged it. Eventually she managed to pull it off, deciding it wasn't really right for her anyway. She left the cubicle, to find another outfit.

Rinoa gasped as she looked in the mirror. Quistis had chosen for her a bluey/purple satin dress, very thin straps, and a very low cut back, which reached down almost to the base of her spine. It was cut beautifully to show off her hips and waist. The front was low cut, much futher than anything she had ever worn before, and the hem of the dress came down to about four inches above her knees. She turned to look at the back, and smiled as she realised the dress shifted colour in the light, going from a light blue to a deep purple. It was perfect. She adjusted the straps thoughtfully, wondering whether it was too low cut or not. It did show off a lot of cleavage. Well, considering what she was trying to do tonight, it was probably a good thing.

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She stepped out from the cubicle to look at herself in the full length mirror. She smiled at Quistis shyly, who was already out there.

"Wow! He wont be able to resist you!" she said. Rinoa did look stunning. Rinoa smiled, and motioned to what Quistis was wearing.

"You look fantastic, Quisty!" she said. Quistis blushed, and adjusted the top.

"You don't think it's a little low?" she asked. Rinoa shook her head. Just then, Selphie re-emerged from her cubicle. She was wearing a pair of khaki coloured shorts, which were tiny, and cut to just rest on her hips. They showed off Selphie's long legs, and made her look taller. She was wearing a black top, which was wraparound style, and came down low on her chest. It was came to about three inches above her navel, and it was this Rinoa and Quistis were staring at.

"You have it pierced!" said Rinoa, her mouth dropping open. Selphie grinned.

"Yeah, ages ago. Do you like it?!" she asked, flicking it with her finger. It was a tiny silver hoop with a diamond in it. Quistis turned her face.

"Urgh, doesn't it hurt when you do that?!" she asked. Selphie laughed and tugged at the ring, making Quistis turn away

"Urgh! don't do that!" she yelled at Selphie. Rinoa gazed at the silver ring. It looked kinda neat.....

"Maybe I'll get one....." she said quietly. Quistis heard her.

"No! How could you....It looks so painful! Besides," she added, "What would Squall think?" Selphie laughed.

"I showed him mine. He said he liked it!" she revealed. The two others looked at her in surprise.

"When was this?!" asked Quistis. Selphie smiled.

"It isn't like you think. When we were on the SeeD exam I had a cut to my stomach, and Squall happened to see it when I was cleaning up." she said, showing them a fading scar. Rinoa smiled and clapped her hands.

"I wonder if I could get mine pierced today!?" she said, excitedly. Selphie put her hand on Rinoa's arm.

"I don't think you should do it on impulse. Think about it." she said seriously. Quistis nodded in agreement.

"Anyway, have you seen how expensive these clothes are?" said Selphie, picking up the price tag. Her eyes opened wide, and she put down the item she had been holding. Rinoa looked at it. She wasn't impressed.

"It's not that much, we can afford them." she said. She was used to having expensive clothes. Selphie shrugged and the three of them went out of the changing rooms with their clothes. Rinoa smiled happily as she thought of the night ahead. The last time she had danced with Squall had been wonderful. She shut her eyes, remembering

he took her by the hand and twirled her around once, bringing her in close to his chest. She leant against him for a second, before he spun her out again. She remembered thinking how handsome he was, and she laughed as he spun her round again, then wasn't prepared as she pulled him towards her, and he had stumbled into her hard, almost knocking her over. He had turned to leave, and she grabbed his hand, pulling him back onto the dancefloor. From then on, the dance had been perfect, and she thought it was so romantic in the soft lights and the wonderful music. The dance finished with them gazing into each others eyes, and she remembered being mesmerized by his face. They were holding hands. Then the fireworks started, and as Squall turned his face to look at it, she continued gazing into his face, watching the reflection of the sparking lights on his face. He had been half smiling, and again she thought how gorgeous he was. He turned back towards her and she smiled at him, wanting to say something more, but then she had seen Seifer.*
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Shaken out of her daydream by the thought of her ex-boyfriend, Rinoa took the bag which contained her new clothes and walked out of the store with Selphie and Quistis. Quistis was looking anxiously at Selphie's navel, still shocked by the fact that she had it pierced. They walked down the long glass tunnels which connected the shopping arcade from the rest of Esthar, and seeing the Ragnarok in the distance, decided to get changed there. It was almost 8:30.
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Squall, Zell and Irvine were walking towards the city center. They had no interest in shopping, and Squall wasn't particularly looking forward to the night out at the club Quistis and the others had planned for him. he guessed it was just another attempt by the others to fix him up with someone. If that was the case, he'd leave. He was still trying to sort out his feelings for Rinoa. When they had been in space, he had realised that she was special to him, and how he would feel if he lost her. he was pretty sure she felt the same way. But then there was Quistis...he knew that she wanted him and Rinoa to get together, but at the same time he knew that she still liked him.

He didn't want to hurt her either. He took a deep breath, thinking over what had happened in space, and at Trabia Garden. There was so much to sort out. But one thing was clear. He did love Rinoa.

Looking up, he was almost surprised as he said those words to himself. Did he love Rinoa? She was beautiful, intelligent, and she obviously cared deeply for him. Should I risk it? he asked himself. The answer he knew already. It would hurt him more if he didn't.

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It was almost nine thirty. They were due to meet the boys outside the club in the centre of Esthar. Rinoa felt excited as she slipped the beautiful dress on over her head. She felt different wearing the dress, more feminine, more confident. She smiled at Quistis as she entered the room. The leather top she was wearing showed off her bare shoulders and looked perfect on her. The red satin skirt shimmered in the dull lighting and made her look older and very pretty. Selphie was standing next to Rinoa, turning around looking at her reflection in the huge mirror. She was wearing dramatic makeup, which made her look a bit gothic, not usual Selphie style. But still, you'd have to wear heavy make-up if it was to be seen at all under the strobe lights of the club.

Rinoa finished putting on the last of her make-up and stepped back. She was pleased with what she saw. Picking up the matching bag she had bought with the dress, she turned to Quistis. Quistis had her hair piled up on her head in a spikey bun. Rinoa had her hair loose over her shoulders, and Selphie had hers in two tiny plaits, sticking out on either side of her head. They were finally ready to go.

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The guys had left about an hour ago. They had gone back to the Ragnarok to change, and now they were waiting for the girls outside the club. Zell was impatient, and Irvine, who had caught a glimpse of Selphie before, was smiling to himself as he thought of the fun he was going to have tonight. Squall, as usual, acted indifferent. He was wearing dark blue jeans and a tight black v-neck t-shirt. His hair was in it's usual messy style, falling over his forehead. He raised a hand to his scar unconsciously. Although he never showed it, the scar troubled him. He was worried other people thought it made him look different, and he just wanted to blend in.

Irvine wolf-whistled as he saw Selphie in the distance, with Quistis and Rinoa following her.

"Damn, she looks hot..." he whispered to himself. Like Squall, he was wearing jeans, but his were a light blue, and he was wearing a long coat and his cowboy hat. Squall looked up, and half smiled as he saw

Rinoa. She's beautiful, he thought. He suddenly experienced a feeling he had never had before, nerves. Suddenly he wasn't sure whether it was him she wanted. What if he set his heart on her and she really wanted someone else. He looked down again, wondering if he had a chance with her.

Rinoa walked up close to Squall. "Hi." she said in a low voice, smiling as she saw he was avoiding looking at her. She guessed he was nervous, and felt flattered. He looked up, and smiled at her. They just looked at each other, before Irvine interrupted.

"Hey, are we gonna go in or not? You girls took long enough getting here....." he said.. Selphie punched him playfully.

"Shut up. Anyway, lets go in, I'm cold." she said. Squall looked at her, not surprised. Barely any of her flesh was covered at all by the skimpy, but expensive clothes. Irvine put his arm around the tiny girl. "I'll warm you up," he said with a grin. Selphie laughed, and pushed him off her. Zell ran up to the door, and asked for six tickets. He managed to convince the person selling them that they really were all eighteen, and they entered the Seventh Heaven.

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Inside it was dark, and Squall and Rinoa walked together, sitting down at one of the circular tables. She crossed one leg over the other and smiled sweetly at Squall, who was trying his best to look casual. Selphie grabbed Irvine and pulled him onto the dancefloor, and Quistis did the same to Zell, winking at Rinoa. Rinoa smiled back gratefully, and began talking to Squall. It was pretty hard over the loud music.

"Are you worried about something?" she asked him, shouting over the music. He shook his head, and turned to face her.

"Rinoa...I've been thinking..." he started. She smiled at him. she noticed a member of the bar staff nearby, and she motioned for him to come over.

"Shall we order drinks?" she asked Squall. He nodded, grateful for the distraction. He ordered for everyone, and turned back to Rinoa.

"D'you want to dance?" he asked her with a smile on his face. She nodded, and they got up to dance just as Quistis and Zell sat down.

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Quistis watched as Squall and Rinoa danced along to the music. it was RnB, and gave them an opportunity to dance close together. She noticed several other girls giving admiring glances in Squall's direction, and was pleased to see he had only eyes for Rinoa. She too was smiling and laughing happily with him, and he looked as if he was enjoying himself.

Zell leant over to her, touching her arm. She glanced up at him, and saw him smiling.

"Jealous?" he asked playfully. She shook her head, looking down.

"No. Not anymore. I'm happy for them." she said, with a hint of sadness. She forced herself to smile at Zell. The drinks arrived, and seeing this, Selphe and Irvine danced closer to the table. Selphe looked as if she was having the time of her life. Irvine had his arm around Selphe's waist, and she was laughing as she gazed into his eyes. She threw herself down next to Zell, and they slid down the semi-circle seat to allow Irvine to fit in.

"This is so cool!" said Selphe, out of breath. One of her plaits was coming undone, but her eyes were sparkling, and she looked ecstatic. Quistis smiled at her. She wasn't used to clubs, she had always focused more on her studies than gone out with her friends, not that she had had many before now. She watched in surprise as Selphe finished her drink in a few gulps and pulled Irvine out of the seat to continue dancing. When she left, Quistis and Zell felt as if they had been hit by a whirlwind.

Quistis picked up her drink and took a sip. Urgh, she thought. It contained alcohol, and she was pretty surprised that Squall had ordered it. Maybe he needed some dutch courage, she thought with a smile. She asked Zell if he wanted to dance again, and he shook his head. He had his eye on a pretty brunette he had seen, and pointed her out to Quistis. Quistis laughed, and encouraged him to talk to her. He got up, and left Quistis alone.

She watched Zell with a smile as he tried to act really cool with the girl, who must have been about three years older than him. The girl looked over to where Quistis was and motioned to where Quistis was sitting. Zell shook his head vehemently, and Quistis assumed he was denying she was his girlfriend. The girl didn't appear to believe him, but continued dancing with Zell anyway.

With a sigh, Quistis could feel herself getting depressed again.

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Squall really was enjoying himself. The music switched to a slow song, and Rinoa smiled devilishly at him. He smiled right back, and pulled her towards him....

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Quistis gasped as she felt a hand on her bare shoulder. She turned, and saw a tall blonde haired guy standing behind her. He was smiling at her.

"D'you wanna dance?" he asked her. His voice was smooth and deep, and Quistis felt her mouth go dry as she looked into his incredibly blue eyes. They were a deep azure colour, almost violet. She stood up, and took his hand as he led her onto the dancefloor, smiling.

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Rinoa leant her head against Squalls chest as she listened to the song which was playing. It was by a group she had never heard of, but the song was so sweet.

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I'll be your dream

I'll be your wish,

I'll be your fantasy,

I'll be your hope,

I'll be your prayer

Everything you'll ever need,

>

_I will be strong, _

I will be faithful,

Cos I'm counting on a new beginning,

A reason for living,

A deeper meaning, yeah,

>

She sighed as she felt Squall wrap his arms around her bare back. He felt so nice, strong and protective. She felt complete with him. She raised her head, and gazed into his eyes. He looked back at her, searching for answers in her dark eyes. She knew he wanted to know how she felt. Inside, she felt a bubbling excitement, she wanted to tell him yes, she loved him, but at the same time she wanted him to be able to know without words.

Finally, he answered her silent wish. He lowered his head and kissed her gently on the mouth. Rinoa shut her eyes and kissed him back, feeling ecstatic. He tightened his arms around her, and she hugged him back. She felt his hair on her face, resting on her cheek, and she raised her hand to brush it away, stroking his face as she did. His skin felt smooth and soft. She doubted he had even started shaving yet, as his skin still had a soft quality to it. He drew away finally, and looked into her eyes. She smiled back at him, and rested her head back on his chest as they swayed to the music.

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Quistis was having lots of fun. She was dancing close to the tall blonde, who told her his name was Silva. She thought he was really cute, and managed to forget all about Squall. It was a slow song, and he put his arms around her, and she responded by putting her hands on his shoulders and gazing into his eyes.

"You look really nice," he said softly in her ear. He was a few inches taller than her, and his mouth was level with her ear. She shut her eyes as she felt his breath on her cheek.

"So do you," she whispered back. He grinned, and twirled her around once before pulling her close to him again. She rested her head on his shoulder, wondering if this would go anywhere. She would love it if he asked her to go out again.

As if he had read her mind, he asked her.

"Would you....like to go out again somewhere?" he asked. She smiled at him, and nodded. Then she remembered.

"Silva....I'm in Esthar to see the president. I don't know how long I'll be here, or where I'll be going to next. I'm a SeeD, and we're on a mission right now." she said reluctantly. He looked disappointed.

"I work in the palace. I heard about the SeeD's visiting. The President has prepared rooms for you at the palace. I'll probably see you there," he said, smiling down at her. She gazed at him with half shut eyes, feeling wonderful in his arms.

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Rinoa led Squall to the table, holding his hand. They sat close together, not speaking. She rested her head against his shoulder as they sat, and he held her hand. Selphie and Irvine came over and sat opposite them. Selphie grinned at Rinoa, and Rinoa gave her a meaningful look. Irvine, who was out of breath from Selphie's exuberance, emptied his glass pretty quickly.

"Are you gonna get more drinks? I'm thirsty!" said Selphie, looking in Squall's direction. He smiled at her.

"What do you want?" he asked. Rinoa sat up.

"I'll just have a coke." she said to him. Selphie and Irvine told him what they wanted, and Squall left to go to the bar. Selphie leant across the table to Rinoa.

"You've done it!" she said excitedly. Rinoa grinned back.

"He kissed me! On the dance floor. It was so.....wonderful. I can't describe it. I felt so close to him." she said wistfully. Selphie smiled happily. Irvine looked bored.

"Hey, girls.....why don't you try kissing me? I've had more practice than Squall...." he said, putting an arm around Selphie. Selphie winked at Rinoa, and pulled Irvine towards her in a passionate kiss. Just then Squall returned, and Selphie pulled away from Irvine. He looked faintly surprised, but had a smile on his face. Squall handed Selphie her drink, and she looked up innocently at him. He laughed at the look on Irvine's face, and sat back down next to Rinoa. She looked at the silver watch she was wearing. It was almost midnight.

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Silva led Quistis to the table he had been sitting at. She told him about the others she was with, and he smiled.

"You all sound very important." he said. She smiled.

"We're all SeeD's, if that's what you mean. Well, except Rinoa. But she's a very good friend of ours. She's actually a sorceress!" said Quistis. Silva gazed into her eyes. She felt an overwhelming desire to kiss him, but she didn't want him to think she was throwing herself at him. Instead, he leant towards her and kissed her cheek. Quistis smiled, thinking he was sweet. She couldn't help feeling a little disappointed.

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It was midnight. Squall leant over to Rinoa and asked her if she wanted to dance. She nodded, smiling sweetly at him. He took her by

the hand and the two returned to the dancefloor. Rinoa spoke softly to him. "I'm so glad....we finally sorted this out..." she said. He smiled at her.

"I guess I was just too scared before. Then I realised I was just hurting myself, and you, by refusing to admit my feelings." he said in a low voice. Rinoa felt tired. She stopped dancing, and looked at her watch. Squall looked concerned.

"Are you tired? We can leave the others here if you want." he said. She nodded gratefully, and the two left the club, telling Zell on the way where they were going.

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Stepping into the cold night air, Rinoa shivered. Squall was wearing his leather coat, which he took off and put around her shoulders. She smiled gratefully. He was so caring, it made her feel unworthy of his love. He put his arm around her as they walked slowly back to the Ragnarok. The sky was lit up by fireworks from the direction of the Presidential Palace, as it was a tradition on the first day of each month to celebrate. Rinoa remembered the last time she and Squall had watched firework, and looking at him, saw the same half-smile he had had on his face at the graduation party.

"Squall?" she said softly. He looked at her, and she smiled at the child-like look in his face. She could see the reflection of the fireworks in his eyes as he smiled at her. She stepped closer to him and shut her eyes as he leant over to kiss her again. This time she brought her arms up, and wrapped them around his neck as he kissed her deeply. She was cold, and shivered as she pressed herself against him. He held her tightly, one arm around her waist, the other stroking her hair.

Finally, he felt complete.

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The End.

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End
file.